

ALABAMA
WILDLIFE CENTER



WILDLIFE TIMES



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We are pleased to announce our Nature For All Initiative! But we need your help to make this innovative program a reality. The Nature For All Initiative will focus on fostering future generations' love of the outdoors & promoting equity and inclusion through onsite and offsite programs. Our total funding goal for this program is \$50,000. Thankfully, the Daniel Foundation stepped up to the plate and pledged the first \$25,000 via a challenge grant. Unfortunately, the funds won't be released until the challenge is met and we raise the other \$25,000. We've set a deadline for meeting this goal on or before October 1st. Until then, Every dollar donated will be matched

Here is the backstory of how the Nature For All Initiative came to be. Last fall, we had the privilege of giving an onsite raptor program to Booker T Washington K-8, a Birmingham City School. The children were 100% in a minority group in a school where over 90% of students receive free or reduced lunches. The majority of those children live under the pressures of poverty, and this school and others often face challenges with funding. During the program, the joy and excitement were abundant. As we walked down to Treetop, I asked one of the children if he was having fun, to which he replied with an enthusiastic YES and explained that this was their first time in the woods. Several children gave a similar reply, and many expressed interest in wanting to help wildlife and nature when they grew up. We hope that this experience creates a lifelong love for wildlife and the natural world.

Nature For All Initiative will aid in eliminating the financial barrier of program fees and provide free or reduced costs in wildlife programs to underserved communities and school systems. This program is the first step in creating a more inclusive and equitable public offering, focusing on nature for all for a better future. Thank you for helping us make the Alabama Wildlife Center the best education and rehabilitation facility in Alabama and beyond.



Chris Sykes

Executive Director



NATURE FOR ALL INITIATIVE



We invite you to join us in meeting the Daniel Foundation's challenge of \$25,000! From now until Oct 1st, every dollar donated will be matched up to \$50,000 to support our goal to launch our Nature For All Initiative. This program will provide free wildlife programs to underserved communities and schools. Your support will make a significant difference in providing accessible and inclusive nature experiences to all members of our community. Together, we can create a more compassionate and environmentally conscious world.



**DONATE TODAY AND BE A PART OF
THE POSITIVE CHANGE!**

EDUCATION UPDATE

Goodbye
& Good Luck!



Andrew Arnold, Director of Education & Outreach, has left our flock and migrated to a new organization this past July! We will miss Andrew's passion, leadership, and wisdom that he shared with hundreds of thousands of folks who visited the Center or booked an off-site program with us.



Great
Job!



Following Andrew's departure as our Director of Education and Outreach, Mary and Viktoria have been promoted to key positions within our organization. Mary's promotion to Raptor Specialist places her at the helm of ensuring the overall wellbeing, husbandry, and training of our remarkable birds. With her expertise and unwavering dedication, our feathered residents are guaranteed the highest standard of care. Concurrently, Viktoria has assumed the role of Education Program Coordinator, where she spearheads the development and management of our educational programs as well as assisting in the care of our feathered friends. Both Mary and Viktoria have proven themselves to be invaluable assets to our team, and their promotions are well-deserved recognitions of their exceptional skills and commitment.

INSIDE THE MEW WITH MARY



Shelby, the Bald Eagle, has been a resident Avian Ambassador at the Alabama Wildlife Center and a focal attraction for Oak Mountain State Park for about five years now. At 1 ½ years old, she was an immature Bald Eagle upon her arrival. Now, she has grown into a beautiful Bald Eagle with the characteristic white head and tail. Given the requirement for keeping her on view for the public, training her has been a slow process. Getting her trained to sit on a glove is the overall goal. In the last four years, I have been working with her albeit as a secondary caretaker. Now as her primary caregiver and trainer, my initial goals are to have Shelby become more comfortable with our presence in her mew. This seems like a tiny step but a very critical one as it will allow us to do daily cleaning chores in the mew without causing stress. We are getting Shelby accustomed to us approaching her closely, walking around her and collecting pellets from below her perch. Her acceptance also makes cleaning her pool easier. I have learned that she prefers receiving live fish in smaller containers of water. With her left eye injury, capture of fast-moving fish in the larger pond was proving to be unsuccessful. As part of her daily training, we have her fly to stations within the mew for bits of food. Our training sessions are hugely popular with the visiting public.

Article by Mary Stockard, Raptor Specialist

CHIMNEY SWIFTS



Chimney Swifts are captivating avian creatures known for their agile flight and distinctive nesting habits. These migratory birds inhabit North America, sporting streamlined bodies, elongated wings, and short beaks. Their remarkable adaptation allows them to cling vertically to the inner walls of chimneys, where they build their nests. Feeding

primarily on insects, Chimney Swifts serve as natural pest controllers, voraciously consuming mosquitoes and other bothersome pests. Sadly, their populations have suffered decline due to the diminishing availability of suitable nesting sites caused by the replacement and closure of traditional chimneys. Conservation initiatives have emerged to safeguard these remarkable birds and preserve their habitats, highlighting the significance of preserving their ecological role and unique aerial prowess.



CLINIC DATA

2023 INTAKE

Baby Raptor	16
Adult Raptor	11
Baby Songbird	446
Adult Songbird	138
Baby Waterbird	2
Adult Waterbird	3

HELPLINE CALLS

January	40
February	50
March	100
April	225
May	295
June	300

**WE HAVE HELPED MORE BIRDS VIA OUR WILDLIFE HELPLINE
THIS YEAR THAN IN THE PAST FEW YEARS!**

AWC UPDATES



Our clinic diagnostic lab is nearly complete for us to perform x-rays and bloodwork to better help our native wild birds.



We created a Kids Nest for young children to come read about wildlife while cuddling with stuffed animals and watching nature documentaries on our 85" TV!



DON'T FORGET TO SWING BY AND COME SAY HELLO TO FRANKIE & BEANS!

Frankie & Beans, our red-eared sliders, are our newest friends at AWC. These turtles spend most of their time in the water, but will come out to sunbathe!

INTERN SPOTLIGHT



Meet Gabe, an enthusiastic and dedicated intern in our Songbird Nursery. Gabe joined our team in May, bringing his passion for the outdoors, animals, and hands-on projects. As an Eagle Scout, he embodies the values of leadership, responsibility, and environmental stewardship. Currently a junior at Auburn University, Gabe is pursuing a major in Environmental Science, driven by his aspiration to become a game warden. His ultimate goal is to protect and conserve our precious land and the remarkable creatures that inhabit it. When he's not busy in the nursery, Gabe enjoys fishing and cherishing quality time with his loved ones. We are grateful to have Gabe as part of our team, working towards a future where wildlife and habitats thrive.



THANK YOU, GABE!



